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Senate

(Legislative day of Thursday, May 27, 2021)

The Senate met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, a Senator from the State of Maryland.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, the fountain of wisdom, You said in John 8:31, "If you obey my teaching, you are really my disciples; you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." As our lawmakers strive to be guardians of freedom, may these words illuminate their path.

Lord, remind our Senators that history is strewn with the wreckage of nations that ignored liberating truth.

We pray in the name of Him who said in John 14:6, "I am the truth." Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 28, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, a Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

ENDLESS FRONTIER ACT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the unfinished business.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1260) to establish a new Directorate for Technology and Innovation in the National Science Foundation, to establish a regional technology hub program, to require a strategy and report on economic security, science, research, innovation, manufacturing, and job creation, to establish a critical supply chain resiliency program, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Schumer amendment No. 1502, in the nature of a substitute.

Cornyn/Cotton amendment No. 1858 (to amendment No. 1502), to modify the semiconductor incentives program of the Department of Commerce.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. In a moment, the Senate will resume business. A few of our Republican colleagues may continue their speeches.

The Senate spent 2 hard weeks working on this bill, and many months before that. We have every intention of sticking it out until the job is done, and that is what we are going to do. I look forward to passing this historic and extremely bipartisan bill later today.

I yield the floor.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

QUORUM CALL

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll, and the following Senators entered the Chamber and answered to their names:

[Quorum No. 4]

Baldwin	Hirono	Reed
Bennet	Hyde-Smith	Romney
Blumenthal	Johnson	Rosen
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	Kelly	Schatz
Cantwell	King	Schumer
Carper	Klobuchar	Scott (FL)
Casey	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Collins	Lujan	Shaheen
Coons	Lummis	Smith
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Stabenow
Daines	Marshall	Tester
Durbin	Merkley	Tuberville
Feinstein	Murphy	Van Hollen
Fischer	Ossoff	Warner
Gillibrand	Padilla	Warren
Hassan	Paul	Whitehouse
Hickenlooper	Peters	

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. A quorum was present.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, we are currently \$28 trillion in debt. Whose fault is it—Republicans? Democrats? The answer is yes, yes on both fronts. Both parties are responsible for the debt, and one side is honest about it. One side will tell you they don't give a fig about the debt: The debt be damned. We are for new monetary theories. Spend as much as you have got; borrow as much as you can; and somehow we are going to combat the influence of China by borrowing more money from China. It doesn't really seem to make a lot of sense, but that is where we are.

So we have before us a bill that will simply add to the debt. We will go further in debt. You might make the argument that we are actually less strong as a nation the more in debt we are.

Where is the opposition? Now, there is no opposition on one side of the

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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aisle, and on the other side, there is feigned opposition. The Republicans will feign opposition to the debt. They will say: Well, yes, we care about the debt, and the other side spends too much and borrows too much. You will hear Republicans throughout the land campaigning against the debt, only to come to Washington and vote for most of the debt. So what we end up with is a \$28 trillion debt. We actually borrow more in a month than we used to borrow in a year. In March of this year, we borrowed \$660 billion in 1 month.

The proposals for spending are alarming. We have spent and borrowed more in the last 2 years than we did during World War II. There are going to be repercussions of so much borrowing in such a short period of time. We are seeing a misallocation of capital throughout the economy. We are seeing a grossly inflated stock market. We are starting to see inflation throughout the supply chain throughout the economy. There are going to be repercussions.

The question we have to ask ourselves is, Are we willing to look at the example of countries like Venezuela or Zimbabwe that completely destroyed their currencies?

People say that couldn't happen in America. It largely hasn't happened because we have been the reserve currency of the world. We have been fortunate. People describe it as having the cleanest shirt in a closet full of dirty shirts. The dollar is weakened by such extravagant spending. Yet people still cling to the dollar because the other currencies are weaker. This bill simply adds more to the debt.

We say we are going to combat China through this bill, but we are going to combat China by increasing a Department of government—the National Science Foundation—that is actually, probably, one of the most wasteful Agencies in government. William Proxmire was a conservative Democrat from Wisconsin back in the sixties and seventies. He started an award called the Golden Fleece Award.

One of the first Golden Fleece Awards William Proxmire gave was an award for a study about what makes people fall in love. You would think, with the lampooning through the years of the ridiculous lizards on treadmills and of Panamanian frogs, that, after a while, people would say: Instead of giving more money to this Agency that is so full of waste and ridiculous studies, we should give it less money.

So, perhaps, if we wanted it to reform, we would say to the National Science Foundation: Instead of increasing your budget 68 percent, why don't we reduce your budget 10 percent and say behave better. What if we were to reform how they pick their committees?

For example, if you want to study cocaine and if you want to study Japanese quail using cocaine and if you want to know if they are more sexually promiscuous, do you know how you

would get approval for your funding? You would call up your other buddies who study cocaine in animals and say: Hey, I have got this great, new study. Would you guys like to join in it and be my peer-review committee?

It is actually the ridiculous studies that we discover that are being voted on by people who are selected by the people who are doing the studies. What they do is they select other people with ridiculous studies, and they say: We will vote for yours if you will vote for mine.

So how do we get \$500,000 spent in studying Panamanian frogs? They want to know whether or not the mating call of the country frogs in Panama is different than the mating call of the city frogs. Well, in coming from a rural State, I can tell you that the mating call of the country folk is always different than the mating call of the city folk. We could have polled the audience. Are quail more sexually promiscuous on cocaine? I think we could have polled the audience.

The thing is, there could be some reforms. For example, as much as I am opposed to government spending, there are some important diseases. Let's say Alzheimer's, cancer, diabetes, heart disease. Why wouldn't we make the committees for the National Science Foundation have someone on there from one of the big five diseases? Why wouldn't we put a taxpayer advocate on there? Why wouldn't we have some sort of inspector general process so that this doesn't happen?

We have to review this. This isn't an academic point. We have now discovered that the NIH was funding the Wuhan lab. So we should have oversight on what happens, but after 50 years of abuse at the National Science Foundation, we are still studying will people eat ants to combat climate change. Seriously, that was a study. How many ants will people eat, and how many ants do you have to eat to reduce the global warming by 1 degree? It is a lot of ants.

The thing is, those are the kinds of studies that we are having coming out of here, and we don't make it any better by increasing their budgets. If you are a wasteful Agency and we give you more money, we will get more waste. If you want less waste—and this goes not only for this. It goes for the military. It goes for any other Agency of government. If you give any Agency more government money, you will get more waste. You won't get less.

The cocaine was actually the NIH, not the NSF. The NIH has got some of the same problems. One of the ones from the NIH, in recent years, was \$2 million to see, if someone in the buffet line in front of you—when you are going through the buffet or Luby's Cafeteria—sneezes on the food, are you more or less likely to eat the food? \$2 million.

Now, look, if you want to come to me and say that we should study Alzheimer's disease, I have open ears—and

on heart disease, diabetes—but if you want to study whether if somebody sneezes on the food makes you more or less likely to eat the food, that is just ridiculous. The American people know it is ridiculous. If the American people could see what we are voting on, they would say: Oh, we are going to combat China by giving more money to the most wasteful Agency in the world.

Where is the money coming from? Is it out of a surplus? Can we go over to the Federal Reserve and open this big safe? Is there a big case of money? Is there a rainy day fund? Is there a savings account that we can tap into to say we are going to have government-funded research to combat China? No. We have to borrow the money from China.

Think of the irony. We borrow the money from China to put it into technology. We complain about Chinese socialism, which is the government running everything and spending all of the money. So what are we going to do? The same thing. We are going to borrow the money from China. Then we are going to have government-directed research, to which we will all say: Oh, socialism isn't good, but the government directed this.

Yet we are going to do the same thing, and we are going to be stronger than China.

This is a good example—and this is sort of a technical detail—of how the committee process works and how grant funding works. There was \$700,000 allotted from the National Science Foundation for autism. Look, I know parents who have kids with autism, and I can be convinced that the Federal Government can be involved in some way, but the \$700,000 that was allotted for autism was then taken and subcontracted to a bunch of eggheads who wanted to listen to a tape of Neil Armstrong on the Moon. If you are as old as I, you can remember being in school and seeing the crackly black-and-white pictures coming back from the Moon and hearing Neil Armstrong say: "[O]ne small step for man, one giant leap for mankind"—or did he say: "[O]ne small step for a man"?

A group of "researchers"—and I use the term loosely—at the National Science Foundation got \$700,000 of autism money to study one word, the preposition "a." Did Neil Armstrong use the letter "a" or the word "a" or did he not? So they studied, and they were diligent. They listened to this 20-second clip over and over again. I think it took them a year of listening to this. They wrote reports and had findings. Do you know what their conclusion was in the end? It was, We just don't know. We just don't know. Was it "[O]ne small step for man" or "[O]ne small step for a man"?

This is something you could fix before throwing and heaping more borrowed money on the National Science Foundation. Maybe we could say that you can't subcontract money that was meant for Alzheimer's to ridiculous research.

How would you stop it? Maybe you would have a committee that reviews the grants and that has someone on the committee from one of the big five diseases who actually says: Should we be spending the money on autism or should we spend the money on Neil Armstrong's statement on the Moon? Should we be spending it on this versus diabetes? You see, everything is a tradeoff.

Everybody comes to Washington. If you ask them—you know, the people who advocate for Alzheimer's or diabetes or cancer—"Are you getting enough money?" and when I tell the autism parents that their money went to study Neil Armstrong, do you know what I get? I get dropped jaws and people going: You have got to be kidding me. My mother or father is dwindling away from Alzheimer's, and they spent money studying Neil Armstrong?

Did he say: "[O]ne small step for man" or "[O]ne small step for a man"?

This is lizards on the treadmill.

Dr. Coburn was a Senator here for a long time, and he liked to talk about waste as I do. This was a decade ago—maybe more—that Senator Coburn was on the floor and would be talking about lizards on a treadmill. I think his was lizards underwater on a treadmill or—no. It was shrimp on a treadmill, I think. They have got lizards on treadmills, but they have got shrimp, and they have got crawfish on treadmills.

Think about it, really. We are a big, proud country, but we are \$1 trillion in debt. Before we get to all of the extra stuff—before we get to all of the COVID bailouts—we are \$1 trillion in debt just from the institutional expenses of the country. We bring in about \$3 trillion in revenue, and we spend about \$4 trillion. Of the money that we bring in, \$3 trillion is a lot. We could spend that on a lot of good things, but we can't simply just say we are going to spend it on lizards on a treadmill and that somehow we have enough money to do that.

So of the expenses that we have, most of the money is consumed by Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, food stamps, and the military, and then a variety of the welfare programs.

But that consumes \$1 trillion more than comes in. So we have been meeting over the last year, just spending extra money beyond the trillion-dollar deficit. So we have a trillion-dollar deficit just from our ordinary expenses, and then we add to that, you know, a couple trillion here for COVID last year, a couple trillion more. We are going to do a couple trillion more for free college, free daycare, free this, free that, but it is not free. There is no such thing as a free lunch. There is nothing in this world that you will get for free. You will either have the future paying for it—our kids and our grandkids paying for it—or you will pay for it through inflation or you will pay for it through default.

And you can default in a dramatic way, through the destruction of a currency, or you can default in a gradual way through price inflation.

As it is, we are starting to see the price inflation take off. There are people concerned about inflation that is already in the stock market and where this goes from here.

But I don't think this bill makes us stronger. In fact, I think the Chinese sit back and, you know, hold their hand up and sort of titter and laugh at America thinking they are going to be stronger by borrowing more money from China.

So I just don't think it makes us any stronger at all. I think it makes us weaker, and it would be one thing if it weren't being so horribly wasted.

Lizards on a treadmill. So they get the lizard on a treadmill and then they have active x rays to look at its joints. They were curious as to why a lizard waddles. So if you have ever seen a lizard or an iguana when they walk funny, they waddle. So why do they waddle? You know, what do their joints look like in x rays?

And so we spent, you know, \$1.5 million studying lizards on a treadmill.

One of the perennial problems in the Third World is the black market. We have it in our country. It is sort of a function of when taxes and regulation in the official economy become so onerous that you need to escape the official economy. That is what the black market is.

So a good example is New York City. The taxes on cigarettes are so high in New York City that you have a black market. In fact, the death of Eric Garner—the sad death of Eric Garner being choked to death in New York City had to do with taxes.

And some people were offended by this. They go: It was police brutality. Of course, it was, but it was police brutality based on exorbitant taxes that caused this man to be selling cigarettes—loose cigarettes in order to try to make a living. But that is what happens when government becomes so big.

So in parts of Africa, Uganda in particular, there is a big black market. And so God knows why or why in the world we are spending our money studying this, we decided to study gambling in Uganda. So we spent \$30,000 studying gambling in Uganda.

Well, it turns out the black market develops because they don't have good title to their land, they don't have good rule of law, they don't have the things that have made our country great.

But instead of sort of exporting think tank ideas on how great capitalism is, we waste it through government grants studying why Ugandans gamble.

It kind of is reminiscent going back to the Wuhan lab. People say—this is what Dr. Fauci has been saying. Dr. Fauci says: Well, who wouldn't want to study the SARS virus?

Well, yeah, we should. But, then again, why would we pay the Chinese to do it?

Well, there are all these viruses in China.

Well, are the Chinese destitute?

I think we are here because the Chinese are kicking our butt in trade, and everybody is worried about China so we are going to do all this stuff to combat China, and yet we send money to a Chinese lab.

Now, we recently voted to change that, but it has been going on for decades. In fact, Dr. Fauci, in committee the other day, said he still trusts the Chinese, the Chinese scientists.

He seems oblivious to the fact that perhaps there is a military influence in these labs and perhaps the scientists don't do anything without permission of the Chinese military; perhaps if there was a militarization of the virus going on—oblivious to that.

So there is a Space Camp in Alabama. My kids went to it one year. It is a great camp, and I am all for it. I, you know, would like to see more Americans go. If some American kids, you know, don't have the means, it would be nice if we could help American kids go to Space Camp.

But I am not so sure, you know, why we borrow money from China to send kids in Pakistan to Space Camp in Alabama or to Dollywood—you know, \$250,000.

We also spent over a million dollars in Afghanistan doing an anti-drug program. Unfortunately, really, the drug problems in our country—they grow it. They grow it like corn. It is a crop for them. The problem is the demand comes from us, but we spent a million dollars on public relations television programming in Afghanistan, and it was to convince the Afghans not to use drugs. It was in English. So the vast majority of them couldn't understand or—you know, most of them don't have television sets anyway.

But this is the kind of thing that runs rampant throughout our government. So, you know, we talk about where would we find the resources to be a strong country again, to do the things that we could do to combat what happens in China. When we look at that, we say where could the money come from?

Well, we spend \$50 billion a year in Afghanistan on the war. It has been going on 20 years. The war is 18 years past having any useful mission at all. The mission was over probably once the Taliban was defeated. There was still some mission for bin Laden, but it didn't really require necessarily troops on the ground and nation-building.

But we have been doing nation-building in Afghanistan. So our Nation crumbles, and we worry about China—you know, the threat of the ascendance of China—and yet, what are we doing? We are borrowing money from China to build roads in Afghanistan.

One of the things they did in Afghanistan years ago is they were going to build a natural gas gas station. This was to reduce the footprint of Afghanistan, the carbon footprint.

So this is the absurdities we sometimes go to with climate change. This is a country that cooks their food on

open fires often. This is a country with an average income of about \$800. Most people do not have a car. So what did we decide to do for Afghanistan to reduce their carbon footprint? We decided to build a natural gas gas station.

So the natural gas gas station was built. It was supposed to cost \$800,000, but, you know, sometimes government is not that efficient so they had a few cost overruns—83—and it ended up costing \$45 million.

So my question, as I heard about this natural gas gas station, was, How many Americans have a car that runs on natural gas? I think there are a handful of people who are really into it and have converted their cars into running on natural gas. There is a trucking company I am aware of. You know, it is not a bad idea, but it is a bone-headed, idiotic idea to build a gas station for natural gas vehicles in Afghanistan. They don't have cars, much less cars that run on natural gas, but we did it. We spent \$45 million in Afghanistan on it.

So my staff was over there looking at the waste, and they said to the military: Can we go see the famous natural gas gas station? And as they—they wanted to go see it. The marine said: Well, it would take two helicopters full of 30 marines in each helicopter to take you to the gas station, so we were told it was too dangerous, and we didn't want to insist on something that was that dangerous.

So we spent \$45 million on a gas station that we can't visit because it is too dangerous to serve up natural gas that nobody has a car that runs on natural gas. And my imagination goes to the gas station, and all I can imagine is sort of copper tubing sticking out of the ground, people running off with copper tubing.

We built major highways over there, but one of the biggest problems is no cars, but the other problem they have in Afghanistan is people put their camels in their tents, and so if you ever want a car to go up and down the road, you got to shoo the camels and the tents off the road.

We decided to build luxury hotels. See, this is part of our national defense. I think it was the Overseas Investment Bank, or whatever. We spent \$90 million on a hotel in Kabul.

Well, we didn't quite get it finished. The contractor built about half the hotel. He built the shell of the hotel with no walls. I think he completed one room so he could send pictures home to say he was making progress. The hotel was never built. The guy ran off with, like, 60 million of the 90 million. The hotel still sits there, and guess what. It is a shell of a building. Our people are worried about the Taliban crawling up in it and shooting down into our Embassy.

So the next thing is—I am surprised it is not in this bill. It may be. Who knows what is in this bill. They need another 250 grand to destroy what is

left of the hotel. The guy ran off with the money, and we have a shell of a building. It is a danger to our Embassy so we need to tear it down.

So, really, you know, we should have an amendment to put more money in this bill to tear down the hotel—the luxury hotel that we subsidized in Afghanistan.

The list goes on and on and on. The frustration of the American people is, Why does it never change?

William Proxmire was talking about this in 1972, studying why people fall in love. Why do people date? The government is doing dating apps studying why people are happy or unhappy, studying whether or not, if you take a selfie of yourself smiling and look at it later in the day, whether or not that will make you happy. Seriously.

Half a million here, a million there. Is there anything in this bill that will stop that from happening? So it has been happening for 50 years. You know, we didn't even authorize these things. They just go on and on. There is no oversight. You ask any questions, nobody wants to give you any answers, and it goes on and on.

Now, this isn't just one party. Both parties do it. Both parties are going to vote for this bill, but I guarantee, if you put up the different waste things that are going on in our government and you said that this is the Agency that is studying the mating call of the Panamanian frog, these are the Agencies studying whether someone sneezes on your food, you think the American people would be with you?

They are only with you because they don't know what you are doing today. They don't know that you are wasting more money; that you are shoveling good money after bad. They don't know that this is more of the same; that this has been going on for 50 years. And nobody, Republican or Democrat, is fixing the problem. We are just shoveling more money out the door.

We are destroying our country. We are destroying our currency. Right now, it is a little bit at a time. It is coming through inflation, but inflation is out there. It is lurking. People are talking about it.

But there is also another way you can destroy your country. If you look at the 20th century and you look at the decline in the stock market, most of it is in, like, 7 days. So those who think that we couldn't have a precipitous correction; that there couldn't be a sudden everybody wakes up in the marketplace and says "Oh, my goodness. The emperor has no clothes"—we are \$28 trillion in debt, and we have companies that have, you know, 200-to-1 price-to-earnings ratio. We have companies that are worth hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars, and yet what is their profit? Some of them don't make a profit.

Is there going to be a day where people wake up and say: "Oh, my goodness, the stock market. The emperor

has no clothes," and there is a massive selloff? I don't know.

But I do worry that the stock market is grossly inflated. I do worry, when we pass out \$1,400 checks, which we did not have, we give them to everybody, and what do the young people do with their checks? Buy GameStop. So GameStop goes through the roof, makes no profit. It is a dying company, and it goes through the roof because everybody gets giddy on it because everybody has got all this free money.

There is no free money. Ultimately, the \$1,400 we gave to people will be lost as wages don't keep up with inflation. It happens even as we speak.

Inflation has been low, but over the last decade, the dollar lost 17 percent of its purchasing power. Do you think everybody in America got a 17-percent gain?

See, this is sort of the difference between the seen and the unseen. Frederic Bastiat was a philosopher, parliamentarian in France in the 19th century, and he talked a lot about this. He wrote a book called "The Law," and he talked about the seen and the unseen. It is also the intended and the unintended.

People—I call it the big heart, small brain syndrome of Washington. Everybody wants to help somebody. We have the same compassion. We want to help those out of work, but if you give people too much not to work, then they won't work.

If people don't work for a long period of time, they won't be hired again. This was illustrated when we extended unemployment to 99 weeks. It was done out of compassion, but as we extended unemployment to 99 weeks, what happened?

Anybody who stayed out of work 99 weeks and came in looking for a job, if there was another worker that had been out of work less, guess who got hired. Every study showed this.

So if an employer is faced with two employees, one has been out of work 10 weeks, one has been out of work 99 weeks, guess who gets hired. The one who has been out of work 10 weeks.

So when you institutionalize unemployment, when you pay people more from the government not to work than to work, you get a permanent class of unemployed, and there comes a point when they are unemployable. What does that do to the people? What does that do to a person?

I think our self-esteem is tied up in what we do for a living, and I think there is self-esteem in every job, from cleaning the floors, to designing a carpet, to creating the carpet, to laying bricks, to being a doctor or lawyer. Your self-esteem comes from being proud of your work. It comes from work. You cannot get self-esteem without work, and you can't be given self-esteem.

We have some newfangled ideas in school that we just give it. You know, Johnny can't spell, but we are going to pat him on the back and give him a

trophy because it will help his self-esteem. No. You have to earn self-esteem. But if we get a whole class of people who don't work, it is a problem—the lack of self-esteem, the worry and concern that come from this. The lack of what it takes to be a robust person is part of the problem with the sinking into despair and addiction that we have as a problem in our country.

This is another waste project that comes out of our State Department. We fund the State Department for diplomacy. I am for that. But we end up funding things in the State Department, and you wonder if they are useful for diplomacy or whether they are just pork barrel politics.

This is \$850,000 that was given to a for-profit Afghan television station to support the development of a national cricket league. Really? So our State Department, which—you know, we have to pay Ambassadors. We have to pay Assistant Ambassadors. We have got to pay all the different personnel, those protecting the Ambassadors and our Embassies. We have to pay for Embassies, the electricity. All that stuff, we have to do. I am for that.

Where do we get the money to pay for cricket? Why is this the business of the U.S. Government? But here is the point: Does it ever get better? Does someone say “My goodness. Someone stuck this little earmark in for the National Cricket League”? Does someone ever say “Oh my goodness. We did this?” and we reform the process and never do it again? No. We give them more money. Every year, every Agency in government gets more money.

If you think there is a waste problem in government and you want to fix it, it won't get better if you give people more money. You would have to give them less.

So what I would do is I would give everybody 99 percent of what they had last year—if it is a terrible Agency like the National Science Foundation, I might give them 50 percent of what they had last year—and I would say to them: Prove to me that you are not going to do this again. They were studying dating back in 1972, and Proxmire lampooned them. Fifty years later, they are studying selfies. They haven't learned their lesson.

If you look at the process, they pick the people they want to approve their projects. You scratch my back; I will scratch yours. You do cocaine studies? Hey, me too. You approve my cocaine study; I will approve yours. That is what goes on at the National Science Foundation.

This one is kind of close to home. You may have seen it. We call it “A Streetcar Named Waste.” It is about a couple blocks from the Capitol over on H Street. It is a streetcar they spent millions of dollars on. For years, there was nobody on it, and for years, it didn't go anywhere. It was a streetcar to nowhere, basically. But we spent \$1.6 million on this, and basically you could see it as basically a trolley car with nobody in it.

It was sort of this nostalgia. It is one thing to preserve something, but it is another thing to create some sort of thing that hasn't existed for 50 years and nobody rides. And that cost us \$1.6 million, and often you will see it sitting vacant and not in use at all.

Now, we have decided that—I don't even know why they even think they need this anymore because I think climate alarmism has really penetrated all of our education. But just in case there is a child in the country who is not afraid that the oceans will rise and cover the land and that we are all going to drown and that the polar bears are going to drown, we need to make sure they know it through a special video game. So we spent half a million dollars on a video app to try to convince our kids that the polar bears are drowning sometime soon and that the end of the world is around the corner.

Will the Chair inform me how much time I have remaining?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Twenty-eight and a half minutes.

Mr. PAUL. I think at this point, I would reserve the remainder of my time.

Mr. President, I would reserve the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA).

The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, today I would like to speak on some amendments I have for this bill. I think it is important that we are all heard on this bill, that everybody gets an opportunity to understand what we are doing here. I think the people back home in Alabama would really appreciate that. I am getting a lot of emails and letters about things that are going on with this bill, and I just want the people back home to understand what we are laying out there to where we can—our people back in Alabama understand the direction that we are taking.

You know, I spoke recently about how the President's skinny budget is disappointing and dangerous and a disservice to our men and women in uniform.

China actively seeks to outpace the U.S. military, and in some cases, they are succeeding. This isn't a 5- or 10-year problem; the threat is right now. It is no secret that the Chinese Communist Party, or the CCP, wants to replace the United States as the world's top power.

The American people need to be aware of how the Chinese Communist Party is coming after us—not just with missiles and military might but with plans to subdue the American spirit.

A significant part of what has made the United States a global powerhouse is the strength and resilience of our private sector companies. Whether it is in the technology, healthcare, or energy sector, American innovation is unravelling. It is what made us the greatest economy in the history of the world.

China's leaders know this, but rather than go head-to-head in an honest competition, they have settled for stealing our intellectual property. Chinese businesses, at the instruction of their government, lure American companies in. They offer cheap—very cheap—labor. They promise an exchange of ideas, but they really want to steal our valuable intellectual property.

China's strategy is to rob, replicate, and replace. China robs American companies of their intellectual property. They replicate our technology. They will go after whatever they can to get their hands on wind turbines, airplane designs, underwater drones, chemicals, or artificial intelligence technology.

According to the Department of Justice, between 2011 and 2018, more than 90 percent of the Department's foreign economic espionage cases involved China. Their goal is to surpass the U.S. economy and gain a monopoly control over every major industry. We cannot allow them to succeed.

Even more alarming is what China is doing from within our own universities. Confucius Institutes currently operate at 55 American colleges and universities. They actually serve as a beachhead for the Chinese Government within America's research institutions. Often, just the presence of a Confucius Institute on campus will enable Chinese officials to stifle any criticism of the Chinese Government at that university.

The institutes also allow the Chinese Government to harvest valuable data from research being conducted at our country's world-class institutions. I was also glad to see Alabama A&M, a public land-grant, historically Black university, make the decision to close their Confucius Institute just last month.

The United States and the entire Western world have given China valuable concessions for decades. We gave China a seat at the table thinking they would change, but they have played their hand ruthlessly. It is past time we recognize that despite all the good intentions, this strategy has failed and failed miserably. The Chinese Communist Party has continually spied on its citizens, violently suppressed dissent, and systematically persecuted religious and ethnic minorities to the point of genocide.

I sincerely hope President Biden will continue to build on the Trump administration's momentum in pushing back against China's aggressive rise.

The TSP, or the Thrift Savings Plan, is the 401(k)-style investment plan that over 6 million Federal Government employees, both military and civilian, use for their retirement plan. The plan manages more than \$700 billion in assets.

Back in 2017, the Board that governs the TSP decided to invest billions in companies with direct ties to the Chinese Communist Party. Now, the people who put money in this are all of our

military in this country, all our civilian government officials, including everybody in this room, in Congress, anybody who works for the Federal Government. This is their 401(k). Do we want to be investing in China?

We need congressional action to make President Trump's decision with the Thrift Savings Plan permanent. I bet if you ask folks who work at these buildings or who served the United States overseas if they want their retirement savings going to Chinese companies, you would hear a loud no.

I will be offering a solution on this to protect our national security and safeguard the retirements of those who have served our country with honor and distinction.

The problem with the companies that are being invested in in China—they don't go by the same rules we go by. They commit corporate espionage. They don't go by the same standards of unity or same standards in banking. They take money from the Federal Government and from our employees to support the military in China.

In October 2019, Senators RUBIO and SHEEHAN sent a letter to the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board regarding the fact that the Board had reversed a previous decision to keep TSP investment out of China. The Senators urged the Board to maintain the previous decision, citing human rights and forced labor violations in China, among other issues.

I will read that letter now and ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, October 22, 2019.

Hon. MICHAEL KENNEDY,
Chairman, Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN KENNEDY: We write in advance of the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board's upcoming October 28, 2019 meeting to urge the reversal of the Board's previous decision to track the MSCI All Country World ex-U.S. Investable Market Index (ACWI ex-US IMI) fund for investments made in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)'s International Stock Fund (I Fund). As noted in previous correspondence, this decision would effectively invest the retirement savings of America's civil servants and military personnel in constituent companies of the ACWI ex-US IMI that assist in the Chinese government's military activities, espionage, and human rights abuses, as well as many other Chinese companies that lack basic financial transparency.

The constituent firms of MSCI ACWI ex-US IMI include military contractors to the People's Liberation Army, like the Aviation Industry Corporation of China and China Unicom, which supply military aircraft and telecommunications support to militarized artificial islands in the South China Sea. It also includes firms like Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology, which was recently added to the U.S. Department of Commerce's Entity List and produces surveillance equipment the Chinese government currently uses to oppress and detain approximately one million Uighur Muslims and other religious minorities, as well as ZTE Corporation, which

was fined last year for violating U.S. sanctions law for business activity with Iran and North Korea and which Congress has enacted a law to prohibit the U.S. federal government from procuring.

Additionally, the basic financial hazards of investment in firms listed on Chinese exchanges are well documented. A recent accounting scandal involving one of China's biggest accounting firms, Ruihua Certified Public Accountants, highlights the extent of the irregularities in the financial markets to which federal employees may soon be exposed.

It is our responsibility to these public servants to ensure that the investment of their retirement savings does not undermine the American interests for which they serve.

We look forward to the Board's reversal of this decision.

Sincerely,

MARCO RUBIO,
Senator.

JEANNE SHAHEEN,
Senator.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. To the Honorable Michael Kennedy, Chairman, Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board, Washington, DC.

Dear Chairman KENNEDY:

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It is our responsibility to these public servants to ensure that the investment of their retirement savings does not undermine the American interests for which they serve.

We look forward to the Board's reversal of this decision.

It is signed by U.S. Senator MARCO RUBIO and U.S. Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN; U.S. Senator MITT ROMNEY, U.S. Senator KRISTEN GILLIBRAND, U.S. Senator JOSH HAWLEY, and U.S. Senator RICK SCOTT.

I wrote an op-ed a few weeks ago about this very situation—a very unusual situation where we were uplifting the Chinese economy with Federal tax dollars. I would like to read that to you now.

The Wall Street Journal, May 27, 2021:

If I walked into Byron's Smokehouse in Auburn, Ala., and asked folks if they'd want their retirement savings invested in Chinese companies, I'd get laughed out of the restaurant. So why would we allow the federal Thrift Savings Plan, which serves approximately six million government employees and retirees, including [our] military. . . . to do just that?

The board that governs the TSP wants to invest a considerable portion of its more than \$700 billion in assets in companies with direct ties to the Chinese Communist Party. President Trump stopped that move from going into effect last year, but with a new president in office, the order blocking the board's decision no longer carries weight.

This amendment says that in the future, no matter who the President is, we will not invest pension money from the Federal Government and our military into Chinese businesses.

Continuing:

Congressional action is needed to provide a permanent solution, rather than relying on the whims of executive action. That's why I am introducing the Prohibiting TSP Investment in China Act. This bill would bar TSP funds from being invested in any security of an entity based in China or in a subsidiary that is owned or operated by a Chinese company.

Blocking investment of federal retirement savings in Chinese companies is good for U.S. national security and good for investors. We shouldn't be funneling capital to firms that routinely violate U.S. sanctions laws and actively enable the Chinese Communist Party's military expansion and persecution of religious minorities. Chinese companies have a long history of putting investors at serious risk by manipulating financial reporting statements and failing to comply with basic audit standards to artificially inflate their performance.

The Luckin Coffee incident is a prime example. The Securities and Exchange Commission found that Luckin, the largest coffee chain in China, defrauded U.S. investors by lying about the firm's performance and inflating retail sales by more than \$300 million. Luckin settled with the SEC by agreeing to pay a \$180 million fine, but Americans who invested their retirement savings in funds exposed to Luckin's deception lost [hundreds of] millions [of dollars].

China-based companies whose stock is traded on U.S. exchanges are prohibited by Beijing from complying with U.S. securities and financial-reporting standards. The Chinese government also blocks U.S. regulators at the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board from conducting standard inspections of the Chinese offices of international audit firms. Congress put investor protections in place for a reason. If a company is not in compliance, investors are at risk.

China's refusal to allow its companies to comply with basic investor safeguards is cause enough to prohibit the investment of government-employee retirement funds in China firms, but there are additional reasons to take pause.

Chinese contractors are supplying Beijing's military buildup, enabling aggressive action in the South China Sea and toward land-

based neighbors like Vietnam and India. These firms also supply the Chinese government with equipment used to spy on its citizens and commit genocide against religious minorities, like the Uyghurs of Xinjiang province. Not a single U.S. dollar should be contributed to the Communist Party's continuing human-rights abuses.

The American people recognize the economic and military threat China poses to the U.S. The Prohibiting TSP Investment in China Act would advance our national-security interests and restrict funds from flowing to firms beholden to China's communist regime.

I have got one more article I want to read on the TSP bill warning that U.S. investment props up the Chinese military, supports political and religious persecution. This article comes from Breitbart.

[Today in] an appearance on FBN's "Mornings with Maria," Sen. TOMMY TUBERVILLE (R-AL) touted an effort to stop investment from the Thrift Savings Fund into securities linked to the Chinese economy.

The so-called Prohibiting TSP Investment in China Act would stop halt that investment, which according to the Alabama Republican lawmaker, could be used in a way to further China's aggressive tactics on the world stage.

"[I] can remember back in 2017, you talked a lot about this," he said. "And President Trump, you know, there's a board of five people that control the pension fund, this pension fund is government workers, federal workers, such as Congress, myself, and all of [us on Capitol Hill, government workers, and includes] \$700 billion.

So what we want to do is make sure that we don't prop up the military, of the Chinese nor their political and religious persecution. . . . We want to go with companies that are going to go by the rules, fight for democracy. And at the end of the day, this legislation pretty much says, this is a message that sends zero tolerance to the Chinese to block their aggression towards United States and the rest of the world.

On defense spending, our job as elected officials is to make sure those who have stepped up to defend our country have the resources they need to do their job. The President's recent budget proposal for the Department of Defense does not—I repeat, does not—give our men and women in uniform the tools to do their job.

It is clear that President Biden thinks we don't need further investment in our military. If it is clear, he thinks it is OK to ask our men and women to do more with less, and that is impossible.

The world has changed a lot in 50 years. When President Biden first came to Washington in 1972, there were two superpowers, the United States of America and the Soviet Union. Back then, we spent 6.5 percent of our Federal budget on national defense—6.5 percent. Today, we spend less than 3.5 percent—a huge drop.

Secretary Austin has said that China remains the top "pacing threat" for our military.

Simply keeping pace with China is not enough. We have got to outpace all of our adversaries, but doing that requires smart, substantial, and strategic investment in our military—much

more investment than the President and many people here in Congress publicly propose.

President Biden says he wants his administration to trust the experts on things like COVID, but this defense budget shows he doesn't apply that same principle to the Pentagon.

Here is what ADM Charles Richard, Commander of the U.S. Strategic Command, who is over our nuclear capabilities, said in last week's hearing to the Senate Armed Services Committee:

I have what I need to deter today. . . . But I need it modernized. There's no remaining margin of error.

His warning is clear. We must modernize our greatest deterrent and keep peace among our adversaries with our nuclear arsenal. The free world, meaning the United States, works and sleeps under a nuclear umbrella that hasn't been updated to the digital age.

We are also in a new space race, and it is a race we have no choice that we must win. In the next 20 years, the total cost of just arming space will be \$2 trillion, and we have no choice but to win in space.

The Chinese want to weaponize this new frontier of war, and we are falling behind. We are also falling behind Russia. We have got to make a change in attitude toward what we are doing in space, and it starts right here in this room.

I heard about the growing gap between us and the Chinese when I visited the Army Materiel Command at Redstone Arsenal a few weeks ago in Huntsville, AL. These folks shared with me how desperately we need to modernize our space-based systems that contribute to our missile defense. The U.S. Army is the largest consumer of space products, and our military relies on the Materiel Command to provide the resources to train our soldiers for research, development of new equipment, and defend our Nation. They should not have to beg us or the President of the United States for the money to invest in the capabilities that we need. At the end of the day, our generals' main report to us is, "We can afford to survive." Think about that quote: "We can afford to survive."

We also need to invest in the safety of our service men and women, especially in aviation. Currently, the average age of an airplane in our military is older than the pilots flying it.

Alabama is home to Fort Rucker, to which every Army helicopter pilot comes to get their training. When I visited the folks at Fort Rucker, they told me about the very real need for increased flight training hours for pilots, which requires more investment and prioritization in the defense budget.

Alabama stands ready to continue to build our military so we can maintain our status as a preeminent fighting force in the world. We have hundreds of contractors and more than 200,000 employed in the defense sector across our State in Alabama. Those top-notch men and women support our world-

class military installations, from the shipbuilders in Mobile to Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, and many places in between.

Telling our forces to fight a war with outdated tools is like giving a football team some leather helmets and decades old, poorly fitted pads and expecting them to compete against modern equipment. But that is exactly what this administration's defense budget is requesting our military to do. Frankly, it is a huge disappointment coming from our Commander in Chief. We cannot let our men and women down.

In the coming weeks, I will be working with colleagues on the National Defense Authorization Act and budget that will enable our military to do the job better today and prepare for all the challenges tomorrow. I am willing to keep fighting for the United States by investing in the men and women who keep us safe. I urge my colleagues and President Biden to do the same.

EMPOWERING LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT

Mr. President, on supporting our law enforcement, being a law enforcement officer is, if not the toughest, one of the toughest jobs that there is. Sometimes it is taken for granted. But it is also foundational to a functioning society like the United States. We rely on these brave men and women to protect and serve our country every day. We are lucky to have many brave and honorable officers in all of our States across the country.

I think about Officer Jonathan Espino from the Decatur Police Department in Alabama. Last year, he responded to a medical call, a man trying to bring his mom back to life, trying to perform CPR. This officer took over for the man after he arrived and began CPR. Just before medical personnel arrived, the woman's heart started beating again and she was gasping for air. This officer saved her life. It could have been you, your mom, or one of your family.

And I think of Officer Wesley Harrison of the Abbeville Police Department in Alabama. Officer Harrison received a call that a woman was in a burning building. Officer Harrison arrived on the scene and, minutes later, after going into the building, came out carrying an elderly woman out of the structure, putting his life in danger, with the help of another investigator. These police officers went above and beyond the call of duty, and they saved her life.

That is what police officers do. So when you get up every day and you put that uniform on of a law enforcement officer across this country, no matter who you are, you put that badge on your chest, you put that gun on your side, it could be the last time that you walk out your front door.

Not many jobs have those things that could happen to you. Most of us have jobs where you go, you work, and you know when you are expected to go home every day. But not police officers, especially in this day and time.

Every day, we are having problems across this country where police officers are even set up. They are set up by the criminals, and they are shot and some are killed. That is what has happened to these law enforcement officers every day of their career, which is why I firmly believe we need not less but more support for law enforcement.

They need more training so they can be better at handling difficult situations, and this is especially true as we see an uptick of mental health addiction across this country. It is getting worse every day. They need targeted resources so they can recruit the best and the brightest for these important roles in the community and across our country. Let's, as a group, invest in the resources that can assure all law enforcement officers are truly good for the people across every State and across our country. We owe that to them. They keep us safe.

Right now, unless State and law enforcement agencies have an agreement with Immigration and Customs Enforcement, if a rural law enforcement sheriff or city official encounters an illegal immigrant in the course of performing their normal duties in their hometowns, they cannot arrest or detain that individual for immigration purposes.

I want you to think about that. This year we are going to have between 1 million and 2 million illegal immigrants come across our border. We don't know who they are. We don't know where they have been. We don't know if they have any skills. But they are coming across our border, and it is an amazing sight.

I spent a day down there watching this, watching our Customs and Border Protection agents not be agents or law enforcement. They were doing custodial work. They were doing things that they had to do just to process these men and women across our border.

And I say "our border." I say "coming across our border." I need to change that because, when I was at the border just a few weeks ago, that border does not belong to us anymore. It belongs to the cartel.

It costs \$3,000 to \$10,000 to come across the Rio Grande, sometimes maybe more. They are coming from countries all over the world. Some people think that they are just coming from countries south of our border—Mexico and in South America. That is totally false. They are coming from China. They are coming from the Middle East. They are coming from parts unknown, and we have no clue who these people are.

Just a few years ago—I have a farm in Auburn, AL. I raise deer. I can show you how to lose money. I have a high fence. I get a call one day from the police department—the sheriff's department—saying: Coach, we need you to come down to the sheriff's department.

So I go down. There had been a sting operation going on with a group of people who were not too far from my farm.

They had a compound built. Unfortunately for their group, they had gone to Atlanta, which is an hour and a half away, to purchase some AR-15s on the street. So they were looking for gun sellers.

So, as they found out that they could buy these guns, they go back to their place just off my farm there in Auburn. Unfortunately for them, the FBI was undercover, and they followed them back and they busted them.

I can't remember the number—four, five, six—but they had a compound, and what they were doing? They were teaching people how to make bombs. Now, this is in Auburn, AL. This is not in New York City or Chicago, Orlando, or Miami. And they were building bombs and teaching people how to build bombs. Obviously, they were arrested. They were all from the Middle East and had no papers. Our country had no record of why they were here, how they got here, but they were here. We have these cells all over the country. That is the reason we need a secure border.

So right now, after they come across the border, we have what we call immigration police, better known as ICE. If you come across the border, the people who have authority over the people who come who are here illegally—ICE has the authority, not the local or State law enforcement. Now, they can work directly with them, but if State and local law enforcement come up on people who are illegal, they have no jurisdiction. That is what is wrong with our immigration laws.

Last year—or this last 5 months—ICE apprehensions have gone down 70 percent because of the rules and regulations that have been put on by this administration. We can't allow that to happen. We are losing the sanctity, the security, and the sovereignty of our country, and it is a domino effect. When they come in, they are sent all over the country.

When I left McAllen, TX, a few weeks ago to fly back, half the plane was full of people that were not Americans. They were people from other places, people who were here illegally. They were here with young kids. There were young mothers. And they were here without any family.

I sat next to a young lady who was probably 19 years old. She couldn't speak English. She had probably a 4- or 5-month-old with her. She cried the entire flight from McAllen, TX, to Houston. I helped her try to find her gate. She was going from Houston to Denver. I tried to get somebody there to explain to me and to her—to communicate—who is going to pick you up when you get there, trying to help her out.

She had no clue. She was just going to Denver with a 4- or 5-month-old. She had no clue about our country, about who to meet, who was going to feed her, what kind of job she was going to have, or what roof was going to be over her head. And if that doesn't shake you up, I don't know what does.

I love people. I have been in education all my life. I love kids. And we are doing these people wrong at the border. And if we don't wake up and smell the roses, we are going to have many, many thousands of deaths on our hands.

We all live in great societies and great homes and have money in our pocket. We have food to put in our mouth, and we take care of our kids. You imagine if this country went to heck in a hand basket and we had to go to Mexico with no money, no ID, no clue about their environment or their language. How would you make it? How would you make a living? How would you get by?

I promise you, the people down there could survive a lot better than us because they have had hard times. We are spoiled. We have everything given to us because we live in the greatest country on the face of the Earth. And I know some people are in poverty, but let me tell you something, the poorest people in our country have it a hundred times better than even the middle class in some of these other countries—the middle class.

So the Federal Government will not enforce these laws, and our State law enforcement officers should be empowered in any way possible that they can. So my Empowering Law Enforcement Act is about common sense. It is about giving the right to local and State law enforcement officers across this country to help out the illegals that have come in this country—not that we are against them. We love everybody in this country.

My God, folks, we have got to help them. We have got to help them. And if we just turn them out there with no sense of security and nobody who can help them—law enforcement cannot help them, unless it is ICE—they are on their own. I can't imagine. I cannot imagine.

The border has been dominating the headlines, but if you talk to a lot of people, even in this room, you would think that it was a fairytale. We need to wake up and smell the roses. Everybody in this room, whether you are a Democrat, Libertarian, Republican—if you are an American, we should care about this border.

I am disappointed with our media in this country. They act like it is not even happening. They will have blood on their hands if this continues to happen.

We want to help. We want legal immigration. We are for people coming. We were all, at one point in time, immigrants. My gosh, folks, we have to wake up. We have to wake up and understand that we need to help and not hurt. If they are coming in, give us an opportunity—give us an opportunity to help, not just put them on an airplane, send them somewhere, and forget about them. That is not the way the American people do it.

There is a high school in Alabama. When I was campaigning, I went into

that high school, and we were talking about certain things, curriculum, and finally the superintendent said: Coach, when you get to Washington, DC, I want you to understand this. We have a great school system here. We want to help people. We have gone from 20 percent illegal immigrants in our school to almost 80 percent in a year and a half. Eighty percent. We can't help them. We don't have enough people who speak their language. If you can't communicate, you can't teach.

If we are going to do this, if we are going to have immigrants in this country, my gosh, let's put a plan together as a group of people who should care and help these people, help them get off to a life even half of what maybe we might have. That is our job. That is our responsibility. God put us on this green Earth to help people, not to help ourselves. We are all fortunate, but there are millions and millions of people who are less fortunate than us.

So as I say today, I want to help the people who are coming across the border. I want to help them. But if we don't have dialogue and we don't have media down there processing what is going on to where we can put pressure on our public officials all over this country, we will not be able to help them, and you are going to have people dying, and you are going to have people who are going to have blood on their hands.

I am one to stand up and say that I am willing to do anything in this venue to help the people coming across that border because it will make us a better country, and that is what we need. We need a better country because we are a country of immigrants. But right now, we are a country of spoiled brats is what we are. So let's help. The media needs to help. We all need to be on board with this.

I yield my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, a group of us chose to filibuster this bill because we think it wastes money. We think it gives money to one of the most wasteful Agencies in government, the National Science Foundation.

Since the early 1970s and since William Proxmire began giving the Golden Fleece Award, for 50 years, there has been a recurrence of waste from the National Science Foundation, from NIH, and from even the State Department. We discussed earlier some of these, and I have a handful more. I think the American people should know where their money is going to.

The NIH spent \$2 million in research to see if using a hot tub can lower stress. Really? I think we probably could have just agreed to that, but no, we had to spend \$2 million to study, if you are soaking in a hot tub, whether that helps to relieve your stress.

The NIH also spent about \$1 million to see if they could help people overcome their fear of dentists. Really?

NIH spent almost \$7 million of cancer research money to create an automatically flushing smart toilet. That is right—\$7 million for an automatically flushing toilet. And here is the bonus: The toilet will actually take pictures of your derriere from the inside of the toilet bowl should you wish to have those for posterity. Seven million dollars for a smart toilet. How does this go on and nobody does anything? Do you know what we do? We flush more money down this smart toilet. We give them more money, and nobody bats an eye.

This is the problem of government. Nobody denies the waste. Nobody denies the ridiculous projects that are being funded. Yet, year in, year out, it continues.

We need to reform the process. We need to have a taxpayer advocate on the committee who votes on the projects. We need to have somebody with a grain of salt who is voting on these projects, somebody who says that studying whether humans will eat ants to curb global warming—whether that is a useful expenditure of \$3 million, studying whether or not humans will eat enough ants to keep the globe from warming.

This goes on. The people at home are like: How could this happen? How could you spend money on this? But it happens year in, year out, because we never vote for less money. It is always more. So a group of Senators here today are filibustering this bill because somebody has to point out that the waste and abuse of money goes on.

The National Science Foundation—the king of wasteful spending—spent \$100,000 to teach social scientists how to apply for grants. So it is not bad enough that we are just, you know, handing out money like it grows on trees, but we have to teach people how to get more of the free money.

There actually was another cache of money that went to Central American countries trying to teach them how to get more of our money. Really? We are actually teaching foreigners how to apply to get grant money from our government that is \$28 trillion in the hole.

We are annually \$1 trillion in the hole, and the last couple of years, we are \$3 to \$4 trillion because of all these COVID bailouts and all of this crazy government run amok, and at the same time we are \$2, \$3 trillion in the hole a year, we are sending \$100,000 to teach people how to get more grants.

The USAID spent \$48 million helping disconnected Tunisian youth to not feel like they are a problem to society, to help them cope with modern society. Well, look, coping is not easy for young people anywhere around the world, but I guarantee that \$48 million that we don't have, that we have to borrow from China to send to Tunisia, is not a good expenditure of money; probably helps no one; probably enriched some contractors somewhere; somebody steals some off the top. There is always a little skimming operation. It was

once estimated that as much as half to 70 percent of foreign aid was skimmed off the top either by corrupt dictators in the countries receiving the money or simply by graft throughout the government that we send the money to. Often, the foreign aid money was going to countries with people who had dictators for 20, 30, 40 years, and we were giving money to dictators.

The National Science Foundation spent \$4.6 million to study the connection between getting drunk and falling down. Now, you would think that would be obvious. You get drunk, you fall down. But, no, we had to go ahead and study whether getting drunk and falling down was something that happens. We spent \$4 million on, if you get drunk, will you fall down? This is insane.

Not one person—a few of us but not a majority will stand up and say: Enough is enough. The NSF needs less money, not more.

The NIH spent \$36 million to research why stress makes hair turn gray. I am at the age I need to know that one. I mean, why does stress make your hair turn gray? Really? Nobody would pay for this. If we got 100 assembled Americans and said "Vote on whether or not you should spend \$36 million studying why your hair turns gray," not one rational, commonsense American would vote for this. Yet this Congress is going to increase the budget of the National Science Foundation by 68 percent.

The National Science Foundation spent \$2.5 million to research the effects of daydreaming. I am not kidding. You can't make this stuff up. So what are we going to do? Increase their budget \$29 billion in more money for the National Science Foundation. They ought to be ashamed.

One side of the aisle doesn't give a fig how much we are spending, but the other side of the aisle—the aisle that I reside on on the right—pretends to care about the debt, but the majority of them will vote for this monstrous bill.

The National Science Foundation used \$1.5 million to study how to make tomatoes taste better. They spent a lot of money. They spent a lot of time. They wrote up their report. And this is shocking. This is groundbreaking research. They found that if you add sugar to tomatoes, they taste better.

You can't make this stuff up. But it goes on and on and on.

I am glad to be joined on the floor by the Senator from Utah. I will reserve the remainder of my time and pass the baton.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

S. 1260

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I have significant concerns with this legislation. I have made no ambiguity about that. I have been very clear from the outset that this bill concerns me, in part because it involves an attempt by the United States of America to compete with China but on terms that don't favor us, on a playing field that isn't

ours, and in areas that play to our weaknesses, not our strengths. We ought to be playing to our strengths and not our weaknesses. Unfortunately, this bill does not get it right.

But separate and apart from my concerns regarding the merits of this legislation, which we will get back to in a moment, I want to talk for a moment about the procedural concerns that I have had. There have been a number of people in the Senate arguing over the last few hours—some in the Senate Chamber, some in the media—that we have had a very thorough floor process; that this has been regular order at its best.

I appreciate the fact that we have had 2 weeks of floor consideration time; 2 weeks, that is, on Senate time, which is just not 2 actual weeks. It is not 2 calendar weeks, not even 2 business weeks. It is a shorter subset of that. But never mind, it is a good thing that we at least had 2 weeks set aside to do this on the Senate floor. So that is a good thing.

It is not sufficient, however, to suggest that because we have had hundreds of amendments filed and because we have had a number of votes on amendments and because a few weeks have elapsed since this bill came out of committee, that that somehow means it is regular order and regular order of a sort that we ought to try to replicate.

You have to remember that regular order needs to be evaluated. It needs to be measured against several things. In other words, a simple resolution designating National Sofa Care Month probably need not receive a lot of floor time or a lot of opportunities for amendments, but the more substantive and the more costly, economically or otherwise, a particular bill might be, the more demanding regular order ought to be.

Regular order is not satisfied, particularly in a bill like this one that is likely to cost \$200 billion or more and that is 2,000-plus pages long and that deals with some very significant geopolitical and economic issues—it is not something that you can really call regular order, when you are addressing a bill like that, when you are constantly making changes to it.

We talked last night about the fact that this legislation started out in committee a few weeks ago. It started out in committee where, I believe, it was somewhere in the range of 150 to 200 pages. It came out of committee, and it was longer than that; it was a few hundred pages. Then, over time, it has gotten bigger. It grew to 14- or 1,500 pages. By yesterday afternoon, it had grown an additional 900 pages, and then by 10:59 p.m. last night, it grew by a few hundred more pages. It is not just the addition of an additional page of text that triggers more concern. One has to understand how the entire piece of legislation interacts, how nefarious provisions, including the late-breaking amendments that we received for the

first time at 10:59 p.m. last night—how those affect everything else.

Just as importantly, one has to, ought to, certainly have the ability to communicate to one's constituents what is in the legislation, seeking input from them so that any votes can be informed by having the voters informed and having them aware of what is in the legislation. One cannot make very significantly drastic changes to legislation in the middle of the night and then claim that it is regular order and that regular order demands an immediate vote on that measure.

What I and a number of my colleagues have been focused on, as we debated this through the night and starting early this morning when we reconvened, has been simple. We just want more time before being asked to vote on this measure.

It is not an unreasonable request, given that you are dealing with legislation that is over 2,000 pages long and that is likely to cost somewhere in the neighborhood of a quarter of a trillion dollars. That is a lot of money, and the way in which we spend it will undoubtedly have profound implications not just for years but for decades to come.

We need to, we ought to, we really must endeavor to understand what exactly this is going to do. In order to do that, we have to have text, and that does, in fact, matter. It is not something you can easily dismiss as an argument that says this has been regular order because it has been on the Senate floor for 2 weeks. When it changes as much as this one has, it expands as much as this one has, when it is as long as this one is and involves this amount of money and this many very significant far-reaching ramifications, it is not unreasonable for us to want more time to vote on it, to consider it, to seek public input, and to allow the American people to know what is in it before we cast our votes. It is a simple common courtesy that we ought to have extended to ourselves automatically, rather than trying to rush to a final vote in the dark of night.

On the merits of the legislation itself, it is important to remember that we got here because we are at something of a crossroads with China. We have all kinds of potential threats—some of them economic in nature, some perhaps cultural, some perhaps military, and some maybe involve cyber security.

But we have an awkward relationship with China, and it is one that we have to be focused on. That is why it is not a bad thing, in and of itself, that we consider legislation to try to deal with that. That doesn't mean that every piece of legislation designed to deal with the problem is, itself, something that must be passed.

You see, if we are going to try to pass something telling the American people that what we are passing will lead to a better outcome with China and our ability to compete with China—if we are going to make that argument, then

we have to be able to back that up. In order to be able to back that up, we have to put ourselves in a position where we can be our best selves, where we know we are poised for success. We have to consider exactly what kind of strategy we are deploying, what kind of competitor we want to be.

The legislation before us—the legislation that has been renamed but started out and to this moment includes the Endless Frontier Act—is something that aims to counter China, primarily by boosting technology research and development. I think it is fair to say that is its primary aim.

This is something that nobody dislikes. Nobody dislikes research and development. To my knowledge, these are good things and, undoubtedly, our ability to compete with China will depend on the nature and extent of our investments in research and development.

But that does beg the question, What is the best kind of research and development? Is it best when it follows from, and is directed by, it could be modified along the way as a result of self-interest, rightly understood—enlightened self-interest—free markets, the decisions of individuals who have something at stake or is it best when government acts, when government directs it, when it is done by Federal bureaucrats instead of innovators, technology experts, and people who have something that belongs to them—an idea, an ability to make something—people who actually know how to see their ideas all the way through to the end and are willing to make the necessary sacrifices along the way to see to its success?

You see, when you start to confuse government research and development with actual research and development—that is private nongovernmental research and development—you run into some problems.

Some of this, I think, perhaps stems from a misapprehension, a misunderstanding of the nature of government itself and the capabilities of government in any system to do things.

We have to remember that government, ultimately, is best understood as the official use of coercive force. That is what government is. It is force—force with the perimeter of official authority, force and taxation backed up by force. That is what government is.

I don't mean to say that in a dismissive way. We need government. Government can't operate without force. It can't collect taxes without force. It can't enforce laws without force. We need government for that reason—to make sure, first and foremost, that we don't hurt each other, that we aren't harmed by outside aggressors who would harm us, and that we don't take that which doesn't belong to us. We need governments to do that. Only governments can do that. That is why we have governments.

Political philosophers going back centuries, including many of those who influenced the founding of the United

States of America, who influenced the documents, including the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, those who influenced the waging of America's Revolutionary War understood that, at a fundamental level, the purpose of government is to protect life and liberty and property.

You see, if we left individuals to do that on their own, they might be able to do that, but human flourishing really wouldn't occur in that circumstance. If everyone had to be the law for him or herself, human flourishing wouldn't occur. When government exists, it frees people. It frees them, not just because freedom sounds great in the abstract or because it is fun to yell at a rally or it looks good on a bumper sticker, but we like freedom because of the things that free people do when they are allowed to be free, when they are able to come together and form what I refer to as the "twin pillars" of American exceptionalism. In fact, I would go so far as to call them the twin pillars of any thriving human civilization. Those twin pillars are free markets and voluntary institutions of civil society.

When you have robust free markets and voluntary institutions of civil society, human beings do better. They can't, of course, function in a state of anarchy nor can they function in the absence of a government because that always involves anarchy necessarily.

But when there is government and that government properly understands its role of protecting life, liberty, and property, it is freeing and liberating, and human beings in that setting can do amazing things. It is what has led to the development of the greatest civilization of the strongest economy the world has ever known. It is what has led more people out of poverty than any government program ever can, ever could, ever has, or ever will.

When we lose sight of what government is, when we start to forget that government is just force and taxation backed up by the use of force, it can easily be manipulated for nefarious ends. It is not that government is bad. Government isn't inherently good or evil. Government consists of that principle of force backed up with the legitimacy of the imprimatur of the State or, in our case, a union of States.

It is that force that is necessary. That same force that is necessary can become destructive of the very ends that it was created in order to uphold and protect and defend, so we can't lose sight of it. We can't lose sight of the fact that government is neither inherently good nor inherently evil. Government doesn't have eyes to see you. It doesn't have arms to embrace you. It doesn't have a heart with which to love you. It is neither omnipotent nor omniscient, not all-knowing, not all-powerful. It just is force and taxation backed up by force.

So the further afield you take government authority and you take it

away from the protection of life, liberty, and property, quite ironically and very tragically, it can become destructive of the very ends that it was created to serve.

One of the ways in which we see this manifest from time to time is when people will harness the immense power of government and the immense financial resources that can be accumulated by a government through the power of taxation backed up by force for their own political ends—even worse, for their own economic ends. When you see people's political ends marrying up with the financial interests of those who want to capitalize off of government itself, bad things can happen.

Ultimately, the American people become poorer as a result of government action; that is, every dollar that we spend is a dollar that won't otherwise be spent—could otherwise be spent in the free market doing good, resulting in everything from charitable contributions to job creation, and many, many other things that support our ability to be free and prosperous as a nation.

China, importantly, doesn't quite see it this way. They didn't get the memo. They are not steeped in Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu. They are not steeped in the stories that we know about our American Revolution.

They weren't raised understanding that their country became a country as a result of their conscious choice to depart from a mother country after that mother country had proven itself to be menacing, had proven itself to be a government that was taxing them too much, regulating them too aggressively, sending them off to war, then making them pay for those wars, all without allowing them fair representation within that system of government. They weren't steeped in that.

They were steeped in different traditions, and they have chosen a very different set of paths. They have, essentially, a command-and-control economy. That is what a country that is run by a Communist Party does; it commands and it controls. It is a very different mindset.

It is a mindset that focuses not on free markets and civil society. In that kind of system, in a system run by a Communist Party, with a command-and-control economy, the state is everything. The government is imbued culturally with almost a sense of reverence, entitled to deference. People assume—or they are at least asked to assume, and many are forced to play along with the assumption—that it has a degree of omniscience, omnipotence, and always the best interests of the people; the ability to foresee and prepare for the future and use the immense force of government to bring about their aims. In every single respect, the Chinese regime grows and centralizes the power of government always at the expense of free markets and free citizens. This is an experiment that has expanded into dangerous and even deadly territory.

Let's just consider, for a moment, China's record on human rights. China has gone so far as to enslave and subject the Tibetan and Uighur people into forced labor, reeducation, and torture.

Under China's infamous one-child policy, it has brutally and barbarically forced families to undergo IUD implantation, sterilization, and abortion.

China, of course, has a long, dark history of religious persecution and of silencing dissidents of every stripe. Under President Xi Jinping, Chinese authorities have detained millions of Muslims and arrested thousands of Christians. They have seized control of Tibetan monasteries and closed or demolished dozens of Buddhist and Taoist temples.

You see, the destruction of sacred places not built by the government, not designed by the government seems to be a hallmark characteristic of Communist systems because sacred places must be for the betterment of the government, and if they are not, Communist regimes don't like them and often do everything they can to destroy them and the communities that formed them. They have even practiced forced organ harvesting of members of the Falun Gong religion.

Or consider China's actions in the realm of foreign policy. In true imperialist form, it is pushing its Belt and Road Initiative—a massive, predatory infrastructure project, stretching from East Asia to Europe, designed to massively expand its coercive economic and political influence.

It has spread Confucius Institutes across American campuses, entangling American universities with Chinese state policies, and turning them into megaphones for Chinese propaganda.

In multilateral organizations, China continuously undermines longstanding democratic norms, instituting policies that, instead, benefit the Chinese Communist Party's authoritarian values. It has also held a tight cronyist, command-and-control grip over its economy, heavily subsidizing industries with money that it has taken through its power of taxation, backed up by its use of force, ultimately picking winners and losers, which tend to be more reflective of those close to leadership within the Chinese Communist Party than those who build a better product or work better to serve their fellow beings.

While China has picked up some steam through these actions, we must not—we can't ever—ignore that whatever momentum it may have acquired is of dubious success and doubtful sustainability over the long run. China, under the control of the Chinese Communist Party, has, in reality, one of the least efficient economies in the world. In terms of GDP per capita, it is not at the top of the heap. In fact, one could say that it is very close to the bottom of the heap, next to Cuba and Kazakhstan.

It turns out that political corruption and state-owned enterprises come with

some financial dead weight too. Now, the financial costs alone of enslaving, sterilizing, and brainwashing 12.8 million Uighurs and other oppressed groups is steep, even as the human cost of this indefensible moral depravity is far worse and infinitely steeper.

Of course, killing future generations' potential through abortion is also as foolish as it is inhumane. As a result of its decades-long abortion and one-child or two-child policy, China is on track to lose a third of its workforce—a third—and age out faster than any society in modern history. The ratio of workers to retirees in China, which is currently 8 to 1, is projected to whittle down to just 2 to 1 in the coming decades, with only two employees for every retiree. China's pension system, which is already showing very significant signs of buckling, will inevitably crack under pressure.

Now, it is true that China is aggressive, and it is true that China is really big, but it is not ironclad in its position of global strength. As its population ages more and more and as more of its land falls into wasted, polluted squalor, it will have neither the inhabitants nor the resources to continue on its current course.

There is nothing about China's principles or China's trajectory that we should seek to emulate—no, not in the slightest. In nearly every single way, the Chinese regime consolidates power to trample over the rights of men and women and quash free expression, the free exercise of religion, and free enterprise.

All of us in America who know of our own struggles know of the bad things that can happen when human beings and governments combine to take undo advantage of difficult circumstances of minorities, whether racial, ethnic, in language, religious, or otherwise. Bad things happen. China has not only allowed bad things to happen; it has made them happen. It has directed that they happen. It has been the reason that they happen.

Nothing could be more antithetical to the American system of government or to the American way of life or to our values. In fact, it is just the opposite formula that has made us the greatest civilization the world has ever known, with the strongest economy, with the greatest opportunities, with immense, upward economic mobility. This is uniquely a land in which someone can be born into poverty and, in most circumstances, carry the reasonable hope and expectation that, if one works hard, one day, one can retire comfortably.

The Founders gave us a Constitution precisely to disperse and limit the power of the Federal Government and to keep the power in government as close and accountable to the people as possible. We focus on this, and we focus on principles of freedom and of liberty, not just because they sound nice. We do these things because it is how human beings thrive. We do these

things because it is the best way to protect life and liberty and property. We do these things because it is the only way to allow for upward economic mobility and the thriving of the human condition.

We should continue to double down on those things. We should continue to make sure that our markets are free and that our institutions of civil society are voluntary and robust. We do that not by expanding government but by allowing human beings to do what they do best and by allowing them to be free.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, at a time to be determined on Tuesday, June 8, the Senate resume consideration of S. 1260; that all postcloture time be considered expired and the Senate vote in relation to Cornyn amendment No. 1858; that if a Budget Act point of order is raised and a motion to waive is made following disposition of the Cornyn amendment, the Senate vote on the motion to waive; that if waived, the Senate vote on substitute amendment No. 1502, as amended; that the cloture motion with respect to S. 1260 be withdrawn; and that the bill be considered read a third time, the Senate vote on passage of S. 1260, as amended, if amended, with 60 affirmative votes required for passage, all with no intervening action or debate; further, that the Senate now vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 60, H.R. 3233; that following the cloture vote, notwithstanding rule XXII, the Senate proceed to executive session, and the cloture motions with respect to Executive Calendar Nos. 111 and 134 be withdrawn, and the Senate vote on confirmation of the nominations in the order listed; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; finally, that following the disposition of Calendar No. 134, the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to use leader remarks and that Senators KLOBUCHAR and PETERS be permitted to speak for up to 2 minutes each before the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now, let me just tell the public and the Members what this does. It is something we proposed. It assures that there is a vote on the January 6 Commission in the next hour. It assures that the vote occurs in the light of day, not at 3 in the morning.

It also assures that votes on the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act will

occur and prevail as soon as we return in June.

This is a good solution because we get to vote on the Commission.

And let me just say this to my Republican colleagues and to the country: This Commission is desperately needed. What has been perpetrated by President Trump over the last several months is the Big Lie—the Big Lie that the elections were fixed, that he is rightfully President.

Nothing is more corrosive to our democracy than a view that elections are not on the level. Yet that has been propagated by Donald Trump and many of his allies.

A Commission can get to the bottom of this in a clear way. It is a bipartisan Commission. It is a down-the-middle Commission. There was significant Republican input by the Republican leader in the House and the Republican ranking member of the relevant committee.

So this is right down the middle. If our Republican friends vote against this, I would ask them: What are you afraid of? The truth? Are you afraid that Donald Trump's Big Lie will be dispelled? Are you afraid that all of the misinformation that has poured out will be rebutted by a bipartisan, down-the-middle Commission?

This is about a democracy. It is about the future of our democracy. The Big Lie has eroded that democracy, and we must do everything we can to rebut it. This is not a Democratic or Republican obligation. This is an American obligation.

Our democracy—our beautiful, more than-two-century-old democracy is at more risk because of the lies that have been perpetrated by President Trump and his allies than it has been in a very long time, and this Commission is a great antidote to that.

So I hope we can get broad support and move forward. I will speak more after the vote on this issue.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

JANUARY 6 COMMISSION

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, as chair of the Rules Committee, I implore my colleagues to vote for this Commission.

On January 6, we all walked over that broken glass. We all saw the spray paint on the wall. We all stood huddled together in shelter, and most of us—most of us, the vast majority of us, Democrats and Republicans—voted to uphold our democracy that night late into the evening.

But it doesn't end there. I give to you the words of slain officer Brian Sicknick's mother. An ordinary woman, who never has been involved in politics, she is now forced to do extraordinary things and lobby Members of this body to simply get to the truth. She said this: "Not having a January 6 Commission to look into exactly what occurred is a slap in the faces of all the officers who did their jobs that day."

For months, national security experts have called for a bipartisan Commission. Yesterday, the Department of Homeland Security former Secretaries from the Bush and Obama administrations—Chertoff, Ridge, Napolitano, Johnson—all called for this Commission.

This Commission is modeled exactly after the gold standard of investigations and recommendations—the 9/11 Commission. It is modeled in the words of how the staff is chosen. It is modeled in the words of getting to the bottom of something and getting something done.

But yet, so many of our colleagues, sadly, on the other side of the aisle are refusing to move on this.

Colleagues, we owe it to the heroic Capitol Police, to the first responders, to the staff members who sat in closets for hours and hours and hours, to the police officer who was called the “n” word 15 times and then sat in the Rotunda and looked at another officer and said: Is this America? We owe it to them that put themselves in harm’s way to protect the Capitol and the sacred democratic process. Inaction is not an option.

And, no, the report we are doing that I am so proud of, with Senator PETERS and Senator PORTMAN and Senator BLUNT, which will come out shortly, is about an immediate response and bills we have to pass and things we have to do and mistakes that were made. It is an important report, and we are proud of our work, but it is no substitute for an 9/11-style Commission, and I implore our colleagues to vote with us to get this done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol remains a dark stain on our Nation’s history. Americans deserve to have all of the facts about that day, and a fair, balanced, and independent Commission will give us those answers.

This Commission would complement the current investigations into this deadly attack, including my Homeland Security Committee’s own investigations in conjunction with the Rules Committee.

After the devastating September 11 terrorist attacks, Congress came together to create a bipartisan independent Commission. January 6 marks a singular event in our Nation’s history, similar to what we experienced on 9/11, and there is simply no logical reason to oppose its creation.

The brave law enforcement officers who stopped this attack and every American who watched in realtime as our free and fair democratic process was attacked deserve answers and accountability for the actions that occurred on January 6.

I urge my colleagues to support this Commission and get the American people the answers that they deserve.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 60, H.R. 3233, an act to establish the National Commission to Investigate the January 6 Attack on the United States Capitol Complex, and for other purposes.

Charles E. Schumer, Jacky Rosen, Patrick J. Leahy, Brian Schatz, Richard J. Durbin, Benjamin L. Cardin, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Christopher A. Coons, Gary C. Peters, Angus S. King, Jr., Sheldon Whitehouse, Christopher Murphy, Chris Van Hollen, Mazie Hirono, Tammy Duckworth, Tina Smith, Ben Ray Lujan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 3233, an act to establish the National Commission to Investigate the January 6 Attack on the United States Capitol Complex, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY) would have voted “nay.”

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 54, nays 35, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 218 Leg.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Heinrich	Portman
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Romney
Booker	Kaine	Rosen
Brown	Kelly	Sanders
Cantwell	King	Sasse
Cardin	Klobuchar	Schatz
Carper	Leahy	Schumer
Casey	Lujan	Shaheen
Cassidy	Manchin	Smith
Collins	Markley	Stabenow
Coons	Menendez	Tester
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Feinstein	Ossoff	Warren
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden

NAYS—35

Barrasso	Grassley	Moran
Boozman	Hagerty	Paul
Capito	Hawley	Rubio
Cornyn	Hoeben	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Hyde-Smith	Scott (SC)
Cramer	Johnson	Sullivan
Crapo	Kennedy	Thune
Cruz	Lankford	Tillis
Daines	Lee	Tuberville
Ernst	Lummis	Wicker
Fischer	Marshall	Young
Graham	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—11

Blackburn	Inhofe	Shelby
Blunt	Murray	Sinema
Braun	Risch	Toomey
Burr	Rounds	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). On this vote, the yeas are 54, the nays are 35.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The motion was rejected.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Anton George Hajjar, of Maryland, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2023.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the cloture motion is withdrawn.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I rise to support the nomination of Anton Hajjar to serve on the Board of Governors of the United States Postal Service. Mr. Hajjar is highly qualified for this position, and his experience with postal unions and legal expertise provides him with the knowledge and skills required of this role. If confirmed, I am confident that he will serve our country well as a member of the USPS Board.

Mr. Hajjar was raised in a working class Brooklyn family and worked as a summer letter carrier, where he learned the ins and outs of mail delivery in his local community. He worked hard in school and became the first in his family to graduate from college, receiving his bachelor’s degree from Fordham University. Before attending Tulane Law School, he worked as a janitor, hospital attendant, U.S. Merchant Marine seaman, taxi driver, and U.S. Custom inspector.

These experiences, along with his upbringing, inspired him to use his law degree to stand up for workers, and he went on to serve as the general counsel for the American Postal Workers Union. His long history with APWU exposed him to a wide array of postal regulatory and legal issues and provided him with important insight into the postal workforce.